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The Law FORUM

SPRING 1982 Volume XII Number 3



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LAW FORUM

SPRING 1982

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U. Balt. Law Forum

From the Dean

Dear Alumni:

As I write to you, we are making the final plans to move into the new Law Center. By the time you receive this copy of the *Law Forum* we should have already moved. This fine, new building culminates a major effort on the part of the University and the Law School to bring together under one roof our faculty, library, students and administration. It comes on the heels of our achieving full accreditation by the American Bar Association and its timing marks for me the completion of four years at the Law School. I have now seen and participated in a full cycle of both day and evening students. For me and the faculty this is an appropriate time to review our progress in the recent past and to begin to think seriously about the future and where we go from here.

Our greatest strengths are our students and our faculty. The statistics tell us that the class which entered this past fall is the strongest yet. The "average student" came with a 580 LSAT score and an undergraduate grade point average of 3.1. Of course, the statistics tell only part of the story. The students are a diversified group, graduating from 99 different colleges in Maryland and elsewhere. Thirty-five per cent of them are women and 5% are minorities. A goodly number come with graduate degrees and many with significant work experiences. This diversity has been stimulating to both them and to our faculty and has made us a stronger school.

Through the Student Bar Association, the student body has participated meaningfully in the academic, administrative and social life of the school. Both day and evening students serve as members of all the faculty committees and their role has been an important one in this regard. They, along with the administration, are responsible for the conduct of the annual orientation program and through the *Advance Sheet*, a bi-weekly newsletter, have developed a vehicle

which permits regular and full communication between the student body, the faculty and administration. The Student Bar Association has also sponsored a number of social events which provide a necessary relief from the daily rigors of academic life.

One would have expected that, given the economy and the apparent state of the bar, applications for admissions to the Law School would be on the decline. Such is not the case. Our Admissions Office reports that applications this year have increased by approximately 10% over last year. This is a welcome development but it



does present its problems. Only a limited number of spaces are available in each day and evening entering class. We fill them all, but the increasing number of qualified applicants makes the task of equitable allocation more and more difficult, and the sheer numbers indicate that more will be disappointed in the coming year than in the past. Our Faculty Admissions Committee working with the Dean of Admissions looks not only at the "hard" academic credentials but also at other significant features in an applicant's background. It has the delicate task of choosing the most qualified from among a group of well qualified students. In the end, we

believe that it performs its task admirably and does succeed in its goal, but it is inevitable that with a limited number of admissions places, not everyone who applies can be accommodated.

There is one dark cloud on the horizon, and that is the uncertainty of the future of financial aid. Next year, the tuition for a Maryland resident attending full-time for the year will be \$2,090, plus \$155 in fees, for a total of \$2,245 for the year. This is compared to \$1,300 five years ago. Last year, 472 students financed their legal education at least in part with guaranteed student loans. There is a real possibility that this loan program will be reduced or eliminated entirely in the coming year. Other cutbacks in financial aid are also taking place. At present, the exact nature of financial aid available for next year is uncertain. It is clear, however, that there will be cutbacks, but the extent will not be known for some time. The short and long term effects of these cuts are, of course, unknown and subject to speculation. They may affect the total pool of applicants to law schools or force students to defer applying to law school until after a period of work. They also may make part-time evening legal education more attractive, indeed a necessity for more students. As a state law school, our tuition is fairly high when compared to other state law schools around the country, but it compares most favorably to the tuition charges of private law schools. This phenomenon may make us more attractive to students who would have otherwise chosen to go out of state for their legal education but who now will see us as a more viable alternative, both because of the increased strength of our program and because of the more favorable tuition charges. Only time will tell how this will all sort out.

The somewhat tight legal market has made it even more important for us to provide a full range of placement services to our graduating students. Our Placement Office has been most active this year and is becoming even more sophisticated. This issue of the *Forum* provides a complete report

of the Placement Office's recent activities. It may be found on page 32.

The faculty of the Law School now numbers 34 full-time members and 25 part-time instructors. The number of full-time faculty has increased rapidly in recent years to the point that our student/faculty ratio is now quite acceptable and permits the kind of interaction between teacher and student so important to sound legal education. All members of the full-time faculty teach in both the day and evening divisions. I expect no significant growth in the full-time faculty in the immediate future.

Our school has always prided itself on the teaching skills of our faculty, and we continue to do so. At the same time, the faculty recognizes the need to sharpen and improve these skills. With this in mind, a strong Faculty Development Committee has developed a full program for assisting individual teachers, and we have taken advantage of the various seminars and programs conducted by the Association of American Law Schools directed toward teaching skills.

Two of the effects of the increased faculty have been the opportunity to reduce the sizes of classes and to add more sections of skills training courses where a more intensive relationship between the teacher and student is critical. It has also made time available for our faculty to engage in research and publication, whereas in the past heavy teaching loads seriously curtailed that kind of activity.

Research and publication are important for a law faculty, because they not only impact directly on classroom teaching, but also result in individual growth of members of the faculty as legal scholars and add to the prestige of the Law School generally. The last issue of the *Forum* you received provided you with a listing of recent publications of the faculty and of their community service work. We are looking forward to even more productivity in these areas in the future.

In the last three years the faculty has made a complete review of the curriculum. The goal of this review

was to assure that the curriculum provided an appropriate balance between the purely academic and the skills courses. We have added a number of advanced elective courses and seminars to permit students to gain more experience in particular areas of the law. We have also added a number of sections to the trial advocacy courses and have further developed our clinical and internship programs. Various extracurricular activities have also been added and developed. Thus, this academic year there were seven separate moot court competition teams which competed with other law schools throughout the country. Each of these competitions is supported by a faculty member who acts as an advisor. I am happy to report to you that three of our teams succeeded in regional interschool competitions and are participating in the national competitions. We have also added a new upper level research and writing requirement as a prerequisite for graduation and, in further recognition of the need to assist in the development of the writing skills of our students, we have added a writing seminar. We believe we have a reasonable balance at the present time but will continue to monitor it and to make adjustments as they seem appropriate.

The Law Library, of course, plays an important part in legal education. In this regard, there is the need for adequate library staff to assist the students to develop research skills and the need for a reasonable collection. We have made good progress in the former and somewhat less in the latter. Currently, there are five professional librarians in our law library. They participate directly in the rendering of services to students and faculty and work closely with the first year instructors to introduce students to the unique features of a law library.

Our collection has grown significantly in the past years, but it still lags well behind law schools with comparable size student bodies. We need to make significant progress in this area, and have made our case to the state hoping to receive adequate funding now that we have in the new building the capacity to accommodate a larger collection. To some extent, the new electronic age will be of assistance here. We already have the LEXIS system and all students are trained to use it. Next year, we will also have the West-Law system as well. It is clear to us that computerized research is not the complete answer, but it will be utilized more and more in the future by lawyers. It is, therefore, important that the new generation of law students be trained adequately in how to use these new systems.

As a state law school which is on a campus of a University that includes a College of Liberal Arts and a Business School, both of which are also growing in strength, we are presented with unique opportunities and responsibilities for interaction. The Law School has participated in the development of a Master's Program in Legal Studies aimed at non-lawyers whose interest or business and professional careers make it advantageous for them to learn about the law and how to interact with lawyers. The program is now completing its second year; it is a growing one. We are also in the process of developing a series of brief seminars on the law for members of the lay public. We tried one this academic year on the topic of residential leasing and purchasing real property and it was reasonably well received. It is our plan to offer a series of similar programs next year to be taught by members of our faculty in conjunction with alumni practitioners.

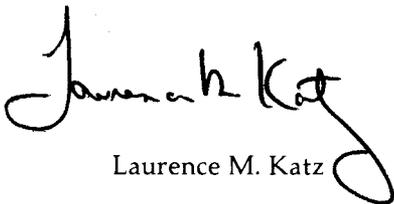
As I review the "state of the union" of the Law School, it becomes clear that the alumni have played an important role in the progress that has been made. Alumni have served as members of the adjunct faculty. Many of you have volunteered your time and experience by serving as judges in our moot court programs while others

have assisted with our various trial advocacy and counseling and negotiation classes. Your assistance has also been meaningful in achieving adequate state support for our budget, and your financial contributions to the Law School Fund through the annual phon-o-thon and alumni drive have provided funds for faculty development and student activities which are not otherwise provided by the state.

I look forward to your continued participation in the periodic reunions and at the alumni luncheon meeting of the State Bar Association. These activities give me an opportunity to hear your views about the Law School and to learn of your ideas for our further development.

The future holds real opportunity for us. We have reached a new level, but it is important that we do not stand still. For the immediate future, we are looking toward membership in the Association of American Law Schools and for the development of the new graduate program in taxation. We have also recently formed an Advisory Committee chaired by an alumnus, The Honorable Richard Gilbert, Chief Judge of the Court of Special Appeals, and consisting of alumni and other distinguished members of the Bar and laymen. It is our hope that this newly formed Advisory Committee will assist the faculty and administration in charting the Law School's future.

We enter the new building confident that our foundation is sound and that we can grow on our strength. To mark this important milestone, we are planning a formal dedication ceremony for the fall. I hope that you will be able to join us at that time.



Laurence M. Katz

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